

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave Blank)		2. REPORT DATE <del>Oct. 1984</del> - Sep. 1986		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Significant Political-Military Developments in Sub-Saharan Africa			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) LaVerle Berry, Eunice Charles, Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, T. Robert Lenaghan, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, Rachel Warner				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Federal Research Division Library of Congress Washington, DC 20540-4840			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Prepared under an Interagency Agreement				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  A monthly open-source summary of important strategic, political, and military events in sub-Saharan Africa organized by region, country, and date of event.  <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">19960122 143</div>				
14. SUBJECT TERMS  Africa, Sub-Sahara Government Politics  National security			15. NUMBER OF PAGES Various lengths	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT  UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE  UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT  UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  SAR	

**SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

September 1986

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of  
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

Analysts: LaVerle Berry  
Robert Handloff  
T. Robert Lenaghan  
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## PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are LaVerle Berry, Robert Handloff, T. Robert Lenaghan, and Moses Pinkston.

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:1

September 1986

East/Central Africa

Uganda

02/09/86

The Ugandan Government detains 25 people accused of plotting to overthrow the government of President Museveni, with the aim of establishing an autonomous kingdom of the Baganda people. Those arrested are leaders of a party, known as "Kirimuttu," which groups together members of the Baganda royal family and seeks the restoration of the Baganda kingdom, abolished by former President Milton Obote in 1967.

13/09/86

More than 40 National Resistance Army (NRA) soldiers are killed when Ugandan rebels attack three army trucks transporting government troops in northern Uganda, where rebels have been attacking military and civil targets since mid-August. The most recent attacks, launched on 12 October, have centered around the Paraa Park towns of Kitgum and Oroi. The trucks were destroyed at Pipia, near Kitgum, by antitank grenades mounted on submachineguns. The rebel drive against Kitgum and Oroi seems to have stalled, with the rebels moving from a strategy of direct attack to one designed to cut NRA supply lines. The government has said the attacks were being engineered by former presidents Milton Obote, Idi Amin, and Tito Okello who have formed an alliance.

Uganda/Sudan

08/09/86

The Ugandan Government reopens its border with Sudan so that food relief shipments may reach an estimated 2 million people facing starvation in southern Sudan. Once over the border, relief officials will negotiate with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army over distribution of the food. In return, Sudan pledges to attempt to move Ugandan refugees in southern Sudan away from the border to prevent them from easily crossing into Uganda. The infiltration from Sudan of Ugandan refugees loyal to ousted President Milton Obote to attack Ugandan towns and security forces has been a bone of contention between the two countries for several months.

Horn of Africa

Djibouti

02/09/86

President Hassan Gouled Aptidon reshuffles his cabinet, filling three vacant posts. Among the new appointees is

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:2

September 1986

Ibrahim Mohammed Sultan, who moves from the Ministry of Finance to that of Defense. This governmental shakeup is the latest episode in a continuing pattern of political intrigue, which has been particularly virulent over the last year or so.

07/09/86 Two members of the country's security forces are charged with plotting a coup against the government of President Gouled Aptidon at the instigation of former Minister of Commerce, Transport, and Tourism Aden Robleh Awaleh, who has fled the country and who has himself been charged in absentia with plotting against the president. The two men receive sentences of 2 years and 5 years, while three others are sentenced to life in prison in absentia.

Ethiopia  
01/09/86 Special forces affiliated with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) storm the military section of Asmara airport and destroy a number of military planes. Also destroyed are three military positions, fuel tanks, and ammunition depots in the airport area. The operation lasts 45 minutes, after which all special forces return to base safely. This operation is the third such attack against government forces this year and coincides with the 25th anniversary of the outbreak of the Eritrean armed struggle.

03/09/86 Ethiopian ambassador to France, Kibreab Getachew, leaves his post without explanation in a case of apparent defection. Kibreab is one of the last career diplomats to have served under Emperor Haile Selassie and who is still active in the Ethiopian diplomatic service. His action seems to be another in a series of defections in the Ethiopian diplomatic service over the last few years.

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:3

September 1986

14/09/86 Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi leaves Ethiopia after an overnight visit during which he met with Ethiopian head of state Mengistu Haile Mariam. Qadhafi came to Addis Ababa after an equally short stay in Sudan for talks with Prime Minister Sadiq al Mahdi. Qadhafi's talks with both leaders centered on bilateral relations and international issues, including the civil war in Sudan, which Qadhafi has offered to mediate.

Sudan

04/09/86 The official Sudan news agency reports that Sudan's rulers are retiring the armed forces commander in chief, the chief of staff, and three of his deputies. Major General Fawzi Ahmed al Fadil is named acting commander in chief. It is not immediately clear if this action has been expected or if it is related to events in southern Sudan, where rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army intensified operations against government positions in August.

11/09/86 Prime Minister al Mahdi says Sudan will settle the question of war in the south by peace and justice, if possible, or by force if necessary. While addressing a political rally, he asserts that a compromise on the sharia laws will soon be reached that will not ignore the demands of the majority nor harm the demands of the minority. The issue of sharia law in Sudan is one of the major irritants among the southern Sudanese who are rebelling against the Khartoum government of al Mahdi.

Indian Ocean Islands

Seychelles

15/09/86 A coup plot is foiled in the Seychelles, according to rumors circulating in Victoria and Reunion. The rumors were sparked by the announcement of the resignation of Defense and Youth Minister Olgivy Berlouis. Mr. Berlouis was allegedly placed under house arrest before leaving the country on 14 September 1986.

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:4

September 1986

Sahel

Mauritania

05/09/86 Thirty to forty leading black intellectuals are arrested on 4 and 5 September for acts which threatened the unity of the nation. Among those arrested is Dr. Oumar Ba, a well-known scholar and leading cultural figure among Mauritania's black Pulaar-speaking population. Those arrested are accused of signing a statement which denounced the government for allowing formerly nomadic white Maures to claim large tracts of land in historically black areas along the Senegal River. This act represents a significant escalation in the racial polarization which is never very far from the surface in this deeply divided country. The upcoming completion of a new dam at Diama on the Senegal is likely to exacerbate racial tensions in Mauritania even further, as there will be intensified competition between whites and blacks for the newly irrigated farmland.

Southern Africa

Angola

10/09/86 Cuban President Fidel Castro leaves Angola after a 3-day working visit to Luanda, during which he reaffirmed his determination to keep Cuban soldiers in the country as long as needed. At the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Harare, several days earlier, Castro declared that Cuban troops would remain in Angola "as long as apartheid remains in South Africa." This newly stated commitment to keeping Cuban soldiers in Angola on a long-term basis reflects a hardening of the Cuban-Angolan position on the possibility of Cuban withdrawal in response to the lack of interest shown by South Africa in working out some sort of withdrawal in exchange for Namibian independence.

16/09/86 Fighting between government forces and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels intensifies, as 5,000 Angolan Armed Forces (FAPLA) troops mass in the Moxico province town of Lucusse in a prelude to an expected attack on the UNITA strongholds of Canganba and Gaga Coutinho. Included in the Lucusse force are engineering units whose job it is to repair the destroyed bridge over the Lungue-Bungo river. These developments in Moxico, together with FAPLA's successful resupply of Cuito Cuanavale, which was achieved in the last few days, provide

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:5

September 1986

further indications that the tide in recent fighting has turned against UNITA.

Lesotho  
24/09/86

Lesotho's former Prime Minister, Chief Leabua Jonathan, is freed from house arrest after Acting Commissioner of police Major General James Dingizwayo revokes the 7 September 1986 restriction order served on Chief Jonathan. The relaxing of the restrictions placed on Chief Jonathan indicate that Lesotho's new rulers no longer consider him to be a serious threat to their regime.

Malawi/Mozambique

11/09/86

In a news conference in Maputo, Mozambique President Samora Machel threatens to close Mozambique's border with Malawi and to place missiles along the border if the Malawian Government of Hastings Banda does not stop supporting the South African-backed Mozambican National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) guerrillas. Machel indicates that he, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe have delivered an ultimatum to Banda to stop allowing RENAMO to operate unhindered from Malawi or have his borders closed. The Mozambican president accuses Malawi of cooperating with South Africa in waging its terrorism in southern Africa, of allowing South Africa to base its guerrillas in Malawi, and of placing its police, armed forces, and security totally under South African command. Machel asserts that South Africa dictates Malawi's policies and that Malawi amounts to nothing more than a South African enclave.

26/09/86

High-level talks are held between President Machel and a Malawian delegation in Maputo. Topics of discussion include ways to strengthen relations between the two countries and to resolve the issue of RENAMO operations launched from Malawi against Mozambique. The talks result from the threat of border closings by Malawi's neighbors and the accusations against Malawi which Machel made earlier in the month.



SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:6

September 1986

Southern Africa

Mozambique

09/09/86 In a communique issued in Lisbon, the Mozambican National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) claims that its fighters carried out several violent operations in Maputo on 6 September. Targets included the army ammunition dump, the municipal market, and two police stations where seven police officers were killed. The official explanation for explosions at the depot is that they were caused by the current heat wave in southern Mozambique. RENAMO, however, claims to have carried out all four operations and threatens further military actions on 25 September, Mozambique Army Day.

26/09/86 The railway line between Maputo and the South African border town of Komatipoort is put out of action by an act of sabotage. The incident occurs only 6 kilometers from the border with South Africa. In the past, Maputo has attributed such acts to operations of RENAMO.

South Africa

02/09/86 A bomb explodes in a department store in a white, middle-class suburb of Durban, injuring 18 persons. The bombing was the ninth since the government declared a state of emergency on 12 June 1986 and brings the total number of bomb injuries to 145. During the same time 8 people have been killed. The government blames the explosion on guerrillas from the African National Congress (ANC); however, the ANC refuses to admit that its members are responsible.

03/09/86 The South African Commissioner of Police reissues an order banning reporting of "security action." By order of the banning, no journalist may witness any unrest, restricted gathering, or government police action. Reporters gathering news material who find themselves on the scene of or within sight of unrest, restricted gatherings, or retaliatory action by security services must leave the area immediately. The reissue of the banning order follows a successful

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:7

September 1986

challenge to the original order by the country's English language newspapers.

- 04/09/86 Violence erupts in Soweto as residents decide to defy a government ban on a mass funeral for 24 blacks killed by government forces during a protest demonstration at White City, Jabavu. Protestors of the ban erect barricades, making routes out of the township impassable, while students staging a school boycott vandalize buses and trains carrying commuters to work in violation of a work stoppage. Meanwhile, Mr. Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, rejects a proposal from Mrs. Helen Suzman of the Progressive Federal Party calling for an investigation of police security action that caused the 24 deaths.
- 11/09/86 A poll conducted by Market Research Africa of 1,000 urban white adults shows that whites in urban areas are split almost down the middle on the future of the vote in South Africa. According to the poll, 50 percent do not want one-man, one-vote elections, 47 percent are in favor, and 3 percent are undecided. The poll also shows that attitudes are linked to ages, with younger people between the ages of 16 and 24 in favor of universal suffrage.
- 15/09/86 Department of Education and Training authorities insist that the "youth camps" housing detainees are voluntary education centers offering life enrichment courses, and are not concentration camps for political reorientation. Former state of emergency detainees, on the other hand, insist that the camps are voluntary only in the sense that detainees can attend the camps or remain in prison. Detainees also see the courses as extensions of police interrogation since most of the sessions deal with their personal feelings while in detention. There are also reports that the government is using the camps to coerce children into becoming police informants. Meanwhile, the Progressive Federal Party in South Africa links the camps to the State Security Council,

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:8

September 1986

which presumably sees the camps as political reorientation centers.

16/09/86 Violence continues for a sixth day in the black township of Soweto as rival bands of young men, mostly "comrades" and members of the Zulu Inkatha movement, clash in a settling of old grievances. In the Zone One Meadowlands area of Soweto, several homes are firebombed and their occupants attacked, resulting in at least two deaths and scores of injuries. Earlier unconfirmed reports say that residents of a transit workers hostel near Meadowlands attacked Zone One residents, causing at least 3, but perhaps as many as 14, deaths. Meanwhile, black council officials in Sharpville township come under attack and pupils boycott schools. Attacks against council officials, seen as collaborators by township residents, are a growing phenomenon across South Africa.

28/09/86 Three people are injured when a hand grenade is hurled into the lobby of a packed multi-racial nightclub in the colored township of Eden Park, near Alberton. Two days earlier, a bomb explodes in a hotel in Johannesburg's Braamfontein business district, injuring three men. Another, not injured by the blast, suffers a heart attack at the scene. The bomb was apparently placed in a restroom of the Devonshire Hotel.

West Africa

Ghana/Ivory Coast/Nigeria

12/09/86 Sam Nujoma, leader of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), pays an official 3-day visit to Ghana. The purpose of the visit is to discuss strategies for the liberation struggle in southern Africa with Head of State Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings. Nujoma's visit to Ghana follows a similar visit to Ivory Coast, where he met with Ivorian President Felix Houphouet-Boigny. Following his meetings with Rawlings, Nujoma will spend 4 days on an official visit to Nigeria, again to brief Head of State Ibrahim Babangida on the progress of SWAPO's struggle in Namibia.

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:9

September 1986

West Africa

Ivory Coast

14/09/86 Having reestablished diplomatic relations with Israel in February 1986, Ivory Coast announces that it will reopen its old embassy in Jerusalem, and names as its first ambassador Mr. Jean-Pierre Boni. Boni had been ambassador in Cairo and Brussels prior to being assigned to his new post. The decision to use the Jerusalem embassy, which remained the property of Ivory Coast when ties were cut in 1973, represents a coup for Israeli diplomacy, since most nations with ties to Israel have located their embassies in Tel Aviv. Only Costa Rica and El Salvador have embassies in Jerusalem.

Ivory Coast/Ghana

09/09/86 Ivorian authorities seize a ship suspected of carrying arms for a Ghanaian opposition group. The Hercules One, flying a Ghanaian flag and without valid berthing documents, is boarded off the Ivorian coast following a tip from unnamed sources. Ghanaian newspapers say that the ship was chartered by Lieutenant Joshua Hamidou and Godfrey Osei, a Ghanaian currently living in exile in the United States. Mr. Osei, who was linked to an earlier seizure off the Brazilian coast of a Panamanian ship carrying six tons of weapons and equipment for dissidents in Ghana, has allegedly been involved in several attempts to overthrow the Rawlings government since escaping from prison in June 1983.

Liberia

09/08/86 Despite being denied permission to travel abroad, well-known Liberian Action Party (LAP) figure Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, leaves Liberia to become a political refugee in the United States after her house in Monrovia is ransacked by National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) partisans. According to Johnson-Sirleaf, she decided to leave Liberia both because of the break-in of her house and because of thinly veiled threats on her life made by NDPL Chairman Keikura Kpoto--a charge which Kpoto denies. Whatever the true circumstances behind Johnson-Sirleaf's departure, the presence in the United States of such an articulate and respected opponent of the Doe regime will add yet another element of instability into the volatile relationship between Monrovia and Washington.

SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PAGE:10

September 1986

West Africa

Togo  
24/09/86

In a coup attempt, approximately 50 dissidents infiltrate the Togolese border from Ghana and attack a military barracks that serves as President General Gnassingbe Eyadema's residence. Other targets in the nighttime raid are the headquarters of Togo's single political party and the state-run radio station. Government army and air force units, aided by French troops from an unnamed African country, engage and subdue the attackers, who are armed with Soviet-made rocket launchers and bazookas. Six civilians and 7 rebels die in the action, while 19 rebels are taken prisoner. Meanwhile, Ghana, which in the past has tolerated and even encouraged anti-Eyadema groups within its borders, denies any culpability for the raid.